

Message Text

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ACTION EA-13

INFO OCT-01 SS-14 ADP-00 NSC-10 NSCE-00 CIAE-00 INR-10

NSAE-00 RSC-01 PM-03 DODE-00 L-02 IO-03 EUR-10 AID-10

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FM AMCONSUL BIEN HOA

TO AMEMBASSY SAIGON IMMEDIATE

INFO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 033

AMCONSUL CAN THO PRIORITY

AMCONSUL DA NANG PRIORITY

AMCONSUL NHA TRANG PRIORITY

RHMSMVA USDAO SAIGON PRIORITY

USSAG NKP THAILAND PRIORITY

CINCPAC FOR POLAD PRIORITY

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 1 OF 2 BIEN HOA 0298

LIMDIS

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PINS PINT MARR VS

SUBJECT: MINH BELIEVES WAR HAS RETURNED TO MR-3

SUMMARY: LTG NGUYEN VAN MINH BELIEVES THAT THE WAR HAS RETURNED TO MR 3. HE TOLD HIS STAFF DURING SPECIAL MEETING JULY 15 THAT HE REACHED THIS CONCLUSION ON BASIS OF APPRECIABLE INCREASE IN NUMBER OF INCIDENTS AND CONFRONTATIONS WITH COMMUNIST FORCES IN SEVERAL AREAS IN THIS MILITARY REGION. HE ADMONISHED HIS STAFF NOT TO TAKE PEOPLE'S SUPPORT FOR GRANTED; IT MUST BE EARNED. HE IMPORED THEM TO SPEND MORE TIME IN VILLAGES LISTENING TO VOICES OF PEOPLE. HE MADE IT CLEAR TO THEM THAT THE PERSONALLY IS NOT UNDERESTIMATING COMMUNIST INTENTIONS AND CAPABILITIES, NOR SHOULD THEY. HE SAID THAT COMMUNISTS ARE STILL BENT ON CONTROLLING THIS COUNTRY BY FORCE AND THUS ARE CONSCIOUSLY IGNORING TERMS OF PEACE ACCORDS. HE OUTLINED, USING CURRENT INTELLIGENCE AVAILABLE TO HIM, WHAT HE CALLED CONFIDENTIAL

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THREE STRATEGIES COMMUNISTS NOW EMPLOYING TO ATTAIN OBJECTIVES. MINH IDENTIFIED THEM AS POLITICAL, MILITARY AND REAR SERVICE, EACH WITH ITS OWN PURPOSE. THE HIGHLIGHT OF THE MEETING WAS MINH'S REFERENCE TO PEOPLE WHO TRADE WITH THE ENEMY FOR PROFIT. EYEBROWS

WERE RAISED WHEN TAY NINH PROVINCE CHIEF, WHO IS BESET WITH THIS PROBLEM, OPENLY ATTACKED UNNAMED SAIGON OFFICIALS FOR ISSUING SAFE CONDUCT PASSES TO TRUCKS LADEN WITH CONTRABAND WHICH HE CLAIMED EVENTUALLY REACHED ENEMY HANDS. END SUMMARY.

1. MR 3 MILITARY LEADERS MET IN SPECIAL SESSION SATURDAY (JULY 14) TO ASSESS CURRENT SITUATION AND TO GET LATEST INFORMATION ON STATUS OF CEASE-FIRE IN THIS MILITARY REGION. MR 3 CG LTG NGUYEN VAN MINH, WHO CHAIRED MEETING, TOLD PARTICIPANTS (PROVINCE CHIEFS, ARVN COMMANDERS, VNAF COMMANDER, G-2, G-3, AND AN ARRAY OF LESSER LIGHTS) THAT THE WAR HAS RETURNED TO THIS REGION. HE CITED AS EVIDENCE INCREASE IN NUMBER OF INCIDENTS AND CONFRONTATION WITH THE COMMUNISTS ON HIGHWAY LTL 1-A BETWEEN PHU GIAO DISTRICT (BINH DUONG PROVINCE) AND DONG XOAI DISTRICT (PHUOC LONG PROVINCE) AND ELSEWHERE. HE REMAINDED HIS COLLEAGUES THAT COMMUNISTS ARE STILL BENT ON CONTROLLING THIS COUNTRY BY FORCE AND THUS HAVE DECIDED TO CONSCIOUSLY IGNORE TERMS OF PEACE ACCORD. HE SAID THAT HE PERSONALLY WAS NOT UNDERESTIMATING STRENGTH AND CAPABILITIES OF COMMUNISTS AND THAT OTHERS SHOULD FOLLOW HIS LEAD IN THIS RESPECT. IN THIS CONNECTION, HE POINTED OUT THAT INTELLIGENCE

AVAILABLE TO HIM INDICATES COMMUNISTS ARE NOW EMPLOYING THREE STRATEGIES: MILITARY, POLITICAL AND REAR SERVICE.

2. MILITARY: ON THE MILITARY SIDE, HE SAID CERTAIN ELEMENTS OF MAIN FORCE UNITS ARE ASSIGNED TO ISOLATE AN LOC, CHON THANH, TON LE CHAN AND AREAS IN PHUOC LONG PROVINCE. OTHER ELEMENTS ARE PROTECTING AND MAINTAINING OCCUPIED AREAS SUCH AS BO DIC, LOC NINH, MINH THANH, WAR ZONE "C" AND LONG NGUYEN AND BA TAO BASES. THE LATTER WILL ALSO TRY TO EXTEND AREAS OF OCCUPATION TO THE SOUTH, FROM PHUOC LONG PROVINCE TO WAR ZONE "D" ALONG SONG BE, SAIGON AND VAM CO DONG RIVERS. THE REMAINDER OF MAIN FORCE UNITS WILL BE USED FOR REINFORCING ELEMENTS IN TROUBLE, BUILDING BASE AREAS, PLANNING STRATEGY, AND GENERALLY TO HELP INCREASE FOOD PRODUCTION PROJECTS. LOCAL FORCE UNITS, WHICH MINH IDENTIFIED AS MAINLY NVA, WILL CONTINUE MILITARY ACTIVITY IN AND AROUND POPULATED AREAS IN ORDER TO CONTAIN GVN FORCES, CONFIDENTIAL

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SUPPORT COMMUNIST POLITICAL WARFARE EFFORTS, AND, MORE IMPORTANTLY, DEVELOP THE INFRASTRUCTURE AND VILLAGE/DISTRICT/ PROVINCE ARMED FORCES IN PREPARATION FOR UPCOMING POLITICAL STRUGGLE.

3. POLITICAL: REFERRING TO INTELLIGENCE PROVIDED BY HIS G-2, MINH TOLD HIS COLLEAGUES THAT COMMUNISTS ARE INDEED POLITICALLY ACTIVE. HE SAID THEY ARE TRYING TO SELL PRG AS PANACEA FOR ILLS WHICH, ACCORDING TO COMMUNIST PROPAGANDA, RESULTED FROM THIEU'S CALLOUS ATTITUDE TOWARDS PEOPLE'S PROBLEMS: HE MADE THE POINT THAT COMMUNIST EFFORTS THIS REGARD HAVE BEEN FRUITLESS BECAUSE PEOPLE ARE SOLIDLY BEHIND GVN. HE WARNED HIS COLLEAGUES THAT PEOPLE'S SUPPORT CANNOT BE TAKEN FOR GRANTED, HOWEVER, IT MUST

BE EARNED. HE IMPORED THEM TO SPEND MORE TIME IN VILLAGES LISTENDING TO VOICES OF PEOPLE. HE TOLD THEM THAT COMMUNISTS UNDERSTAND IMPACT OF PEOPLE MUCH BETTER THAN GVN CADRE. HE SAID THAT ONLY WAY COMMUNISTS CAN WIN POLITICALLY IN MR 3 IS IF GVN CADRE FAIL TO DO WHAT IS REQUIRED TO GAIN SUPPORT OF PEOPLE.

4. HE SAID COMMUNISTS ARE ALREADY AT WORK IN THIS MILITARY REGION. CURRENT INTELLIGENCE INDICATES THAT COMMUNIST CADRE ARE MAKING ALL-OUT EFFORT TO ESTABLISH POLITICAL ENTITIES IN SELECTED LOCALITIES; ARE ORGANIZING VILLAGE GOVERNMENTS IN CONTROLLED AREAS; HAVE SET UP PARTY CHAPTERS IN CONTESTED AREAS; AND ARE ORGANIZING CELLS IN AREAS UNDER GVN CONTROL.

5. REAR SERVICE: MINH SAID THAT COMMUNIST REAR SERVICE ELEMENTS ARE CONSTRUCTING INSTANT HAMLETS, REPAIRING AND BUILDING ROADS AND AIRSTRIPES, DEVELOPING AGRICULTURAL SITES AND HELPING TO INCREASE FOOD PRODUCTION, ALL OF WHICH IS AIMED AT ATTRACTING PEOPLE TO CONTROLLED AREAS. HE REAISED QUESTION OF TRADING WITH COMMUNISTS AS ONE AREA IN WHICH THERE IS MUCH EXPLOITATION BY WHAT HE CALLED "GREEDY"PEOPLE. MINH SAID THAT COMMUNISTS HAVE DEVELOPED ALMOST PERFECT SCHEME IN THIS REGARD WHICH CAN'T HELP BUT EMBARRASS GVN. HE SAID THAT COMMUNISTS SATISFY THOSE WHO SELL BY PAYING EXCESSIVELY HIGH PRICES; SATISFY THOSE WHO BUY BY CHARGING LESS THAN MARKET PRICES; THUS UPSETTING THE NORMAL PRICE/PROFIT MARGIN. MINH WOUNDERED ALOUD ABOUT HOW THE PEOPLE WILL REACT NOW THAT GVN HAS MADE UP ITS MIND TO ERADICATE PRACTICE.
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6. MIN'S REMARKS ON TRADING WITH COMMUNISTS ENGENDERED WHAT WAS TO MOST PEOPLE IN ATTENDANCE OUT OF CHARACTER SPIRITED DEBAT. THE TAY NINH PROVINCE CHIEF, COLONEL LE VAN THIEN, WHO HAS ORGANIZED ONE OF THE BETTER INSTRUMENTS FOR ATTACKING THIS PARTICULAR PROBLEM, RAISED EYEBROWS WHEN HE OPENLY ATTACKED UNNAMED OFFICIALS IN SAIGON FOR "CONDONING" TRADE WITH COMMUNISTS. HE SAID HIS PROVINCE HAD ARRESTED NUMBER OF PEOPLE ONLY TO HAVE THEM RELEASED BECAUSE THEY HAD MONEY

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CINCPAC FOR POLAD PRIORITY

C O N F I D E N T I A L FINAL SECTION OF 2 BIEN HOA 0298

LIMDIS

WITH WHICH TO BUY THEIR RELEASE. THIEN SAID THAT PROBLEM IS NOT IN TAY NINH, IT IS IN SAIGON. HE SAID TOO MANY OFFICIALS IN SAIGON, ONES WITH POWER AND MONEY, PROVIDE SAFE CONDUCT PASSES FOR TRUCKS LADEN WITH CONTRABAND WHICH EVENTUALLY REACH COMMUNIST HANDS. "UNTIL THIS PRACTICE IS STOPPED," HE SAID, "TRADING WITH THE ENEMY WILL CONTINUE." BG LE VAN TU, CG 25TH ARVN DIVISION, TRIED TO MINIMIZE PROBLEM BUT THIEN REFUSED TO GIVE GROUND. MINH INTERVENED AND CLOSED OUT MEETING BY SAYING THAT MATTER WOULD BE REFERRED TO SPECIAL TASK FORCE SET UP TO HANDLE PROBLEM.

7. COMMENT: WHAT MINH HAD TO SAY TO HIS STAFF IS IMPORTANT AND RELEVANT TO WHAT IS GOING ON TODAY IN THIS MILITARY REGION. WHAT HE NEGLECTED TO SAY, HOWEVER, IS MORE IMPORTANT AND CERTAINLY MUCH MORE RELEVANT TO WHAT MINH CALLED THE RETURN TO THE WAR. ALTHOUGH THE COMMUNISTS UNQUESTIONABLY CONTRIBUTED TO THE STEPPED UP FIGHTING, MINH'S CALCULATED DECISION IN VIOLATION CONFIDENTIAL

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OF THE JOINT COMMUNIQUE, WHICH HE FAILED TO MENTION, TO SEND HIS TROOPS INTO TERRITORY OCCUPIED BY COMMUNIST FORCES, AS WELL AS HIS CAMPAIGN TO REOPEN MAIN LOCS, INCLUDING THE CURRENT CAMPAIGN ON HIGHWAY LTL 1-A BETWEEN PHU GIAO DISTRICT AND DONG XOAI DISTRICT, FORCED THE COMMUNISTS TO USE THE ONLY OPTION OPEN TO THEM APART FROM SURRENDERING: RETALIATE; AND RETALIATE THEY DID.

8. WHAT HAPPENS NOW IS OPEN TO SPECULATION. MY OWN VIEW IS THAT THE FIGHTING WILL REMAIN AT ABOUT THE SAME LEVEL (MIGHT INCREASE IF COMMUNISTS CONTINUE TO RESIST ARVN ATTEMPTS TO OPEN 1-A), AND THAT PEACE, THE JOINT COMMUNIQUE NOTWITHSTANDING, IS A LONG WAY OFF UNLESS THE BELLIGERENTS RUN OUT OF STEAM AND DECIDE TO LIVE WITHIN THE FRAMEWORK OF THE PEACE ACCORID.
WALKINSHAW

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